FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Traditional Worship Service
The Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 11, 2025

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

WELCOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE

PRELUDE Prelude on "Tallis Canon" arr. Richard Purvis

*CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather as God's beloved children –
However glad we are, however out of sorts we are.
We come together as a people whom Jesus calls into community –
So this becomes a place where all are welcome.
We have come to give thanks, to pray and sing, to be with other –
Let us worship God.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN #313
Come Down, O Love Divine DOWN AMPNEY

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSON

*Please stand if you are able.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, we ask for your help, your power, your Spirit, so that we can amend our lives and grow more each day into the image of Christ. We confess that we fear what is different. We confess that it's easier to lock the doors of our community than to receive those who don't look like we look, love like we love, or vote the way we vote. We confess that we have not lived out your call to share in abundant life and unconditional love. We believe that you have the power to turn us around to a more inclusive way of living, so we ask you to do that. We ask you to give us the courage to change. We ask that you give us the energy, intelligence, imagination, and love to be your people in all we say and do. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, hear this Good News: the love of God is beyond measure, and you are included in that love. Know that you are forgiven and thus freed to love and serve. **Alleluia! Amen.**

WE LISTEN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 92:5-14 (Nan Merrill; *Psalms for Praying)* Barbara Hjorth

Acts 8:26-39

Leader: The word of the Lord;

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON Rev. Karen Kinney

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

How have we heard the Spirit nudging us to welcome someone different from us and share the story of Jesus? Does difference keep us from engaging in conversation? What are your thoughts on Philip baptizing the Ethiopian man with no statement of faith?

*SERMON HYMN #326

Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart MORECAMBE

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from the *Brief Statement of Faith*)

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor

and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

MINUTE FOR MISSION AND OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory Thee We Adore — Adapted from the Plainchant

Chancel Choir

*Doxology — #592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow — OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*SENDING HYMN — #411

Arise, Your Light is Come! — FESTAL SONGS

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Postlude on a Theme by Gibbons, Op. 105 — Charles V. Stanford

You're welcome to stay and enjoy the Postlude or to depart while the music is played.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

Call to Worship and Prayer of Confession "Written by Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, 'Hold Fast to What Is Good'. Used with permission."